

THEATRE CALGARY PRESENTS THE
WORLD PREMIERE OF
MARY AND MAX – A NEW MUSICAL

OCTOBER 16 – NOVEMBER 11, 2018

(CALGARY, AB) - Theatre Calgary is preparing to open *Mary and Max – A New Musical*, our second world premiere of the 2018-19 season, with music and lyrics by **Bobby Cronin**, book by **Crystal Skillman**, directed by Theatre Calgary's Artistic Director **Stafford Arima**, choreography by **Jenn Rapp**, and orchestrations and music supervision by **Anna Ebbesen**.

Based on an Australian claymation film by **Adam Elliot** about two unlikely pen pals, *Mary and Max – A New Musical* is a hilarious and heartening tale that proves friendship can be found in the most unexpected of places. The story focuses on lonely 10-year-old Mary from Melbourne, as she writes her way into the life of Max, a 44-year-old man with Asperger's Syndrome in New York City. With quirky melodies and heartfelt dialogue, their friendship is one audiences will never forget.

"*Mary and Max takes place before email, texts, or messaging became part of our everyday lives,*" says Arima, who has been a part of the five-year development process of bringing the show to life. "*The musical celebrates how friendships begin, develop, transform, and are redefined through the "old-fashioned," and ritualistic experience of letter writing. It is a heartwarming story that reminds me of the power of connection – by whatever means necessary.*"

"*I think the story is timeless. I don't think it would matter what decade it was in, I just happen to love that the story does take place before social media,*" says Cronin. "*It's about the importance of connection, and I don't think the digital world allows for the same kind of connection. I want people to see the importance of kindness and communication.*"

Co-creator Skillman shares Cronin's passion for connection. "*I think it is important to inform an audience, especially a young audience, to what the time was like when you would chose words in a certain process from putting pen to paper. It's about understanding that the moments in our lives that we experience, both good and bad, are gifts,*" she says.

Mary and Max features **Lauren Elder** (Broadway credits include the revival productions of *Side Show* and *Hair*) in the role of Mary, **Anthony Galde** (original Broadway productions of *Wicked*, *The Civil War*, and *Starlight Express*) as Max, and **18 year-old Calgarian Katie McMillan** who makes her TC debut as Young Mary. Joining them are **Susan Gilmour** (TC's *Crazy for You*, *The Secret Garden*, *Mary Poppins*, *Fantine in the Canadian*, Broadway, and International touring productions of *Les Misérables*) as Vera, and **Nick Adams** (original Broadway productions of *Priscilla*, *Queen of the Desert*, and *The Pirate Queen*) as Damian. Rounding out the cast are **Chase Crandell** (Theatre Calgary debut) as Moon, **Alana Hibbert** (Theatre Calgary debut) as Mother Chocolate, **Kevin Aichele** (*Mary Poppins* at Theatre Calgary) as Noel, **Kelsey Verzotti** (Theatre Calgary debut) as Lady Noblet, and **Eric Wigston** (*The Secret Garden* at Theatre Calgary) as Vanity Noblet.

Along with director Arima, *Mary and Max – A New Musical* creative team also includes Music Director and Additional Orchestrations by **Joshua Zecher-Ross**, Sets and Costume Design by **Bretta Gerecke** (*Nevermore*, Off-Broadway; *The Tempest*, Stratford Festival of Canada; *Fat Friends*, UK Tour), Lighting by **Kimberly Purtell** (*Snow Child*, Arena Stage), Projection Design by **Sean Nieuwenhuis** (Broadway: *Summer: The Donna Summer Musical*; *Jesus Christ Superstar* - revival), Sound Design by **Peter McBoyle** (*Arrabel*, A.R.T.; *Life After*, Toronto), and Voice and Dialect Coaching by **Jane MacFarlane**. The Stage Manager is **Patti Neice**, Assistant Stage Manager is **Emma Brager**, and the Apprentice Stage Manager is **Chandler Ontkean**.

Mary and Max previews October 16-18. Opening night is October 19. Performances run Tuesday thru Sunday with evening curtain at 7:30pm (Tues-Thurs & Sunday) and 8:00pm (Fri & Sat), weekend matinees at 2:00pm. Tickets for all performances start as low as \$45.00 and can be purchased through Theatre Calgary at 403-294-7447 or online at theatrecalgary.com. All performances take place in Arts Commons Max Bell Theatre.

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For more information or interview requests please contact:
Christopher Loach, Director of Communications, Theatre Calgary
ph: 403-294-7440, ext.1309 cloach@theatrecalgary.com

TELEVISION/VIDEO MEDIA CALL - WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 17, 1:00pm
Max Bell Theatre, Arts Commons PRINT - photos available upon request